

Moran and Peterson Request Changes to Cuban Trade Policies

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Jerry Moran and Rep. Collin Peterson, Chairman of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, requested this week that President Obama repeal U.S. Department of Treasury regulations that restrict access of U.S. farmers and ranchers to Cuban markets. In recent weeks, reports have indicated the Obama Administration is preparing to make changes to U.S. travel policy with Cuba. Moran and Peterson requested the Administration include a repeal of the agricultural trade restrictions along with any regulatory change in U.S. travel policy toward Cuba.

In 2000, Congress passed the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSRA). For the first time this allowed the export of agricultural products and medical supplies from the U.S. to Cuba. In 2005, after four years of rapid growth in agricultural trade with Cuba, the U.S. Department of Treasury put into effect regulations that changed the meaning of trade policies with Cuba under TSRA, by redefining the meaning of “payment of cash in advance.” Additional regulations prohibited the direct transfer of cash payments from Cuban buyers to U.S. sellers. Following implementation of these restrictions, total U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba significantly declined, as did the U.S. share of the Cuban import market.

“If the Obama Administration is preparing to make changes to U.S. travel policy towards Cuba, it only makes sense to repeal the 2005 restrictions placed on agricultural sales. These changes are the most widely supported modifications of U.S. policy on Cuba and are estimated to result in over \$270 million in new exports,” said Moran.

“Cuba relies heavily on imported food but current regulations limiting American farmers’ access hand-deliver the Cuban market to our competitors around the world. While I prefer and remain committed to a legislative solution, repealing these regulations is a first step to boosting demand and expanding U.S. agriculture exports to Cuba,” Peterson said.

Earlier this year, Peterson and Moran introduced H.R. 4645 to expand agricultural trade with Cuba. Nearly 150 U.S. organizations have voiced their strong support for H.R. 4645, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Association of Wheat Growers and the National Farmers Union. The changes to agricultural trade rules sought by Moran and Peterson in H.R. 4645 are similar to the regulatory changes requested in the letter. [Click here](#) to view a copy of the letter sent to President Obama.

Moran is a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee.

###